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ABSTRACT

Process writing, a student-centered approach to literacy, can be implemented to meet the academic needs of second language learners at the high school level. A discussion of this approach begins with a description of the profoundly hearing impaired as limited-English-proficient (LEP) students, and then examines the interrelationship of three theoretical perspectives: the Language Proficiency Model, the Process Writing Approach, and the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA). It shows how the components of Process Writing can be used as a vehicle for the implementation of CALLA. An integrated lesson plan model designed for secondary LEP students is provided. (MSE)

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Integrating Theory and Practice: A Process Writing Approach for Secondary Deaf Students

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Running head: A PROCESS WRITING APPROACH FOR DEAF STUDENTS

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Abstract

Process Writing, a student-centered approach to literacy can be implemented to meet the academic needs of second language learners at the high school level. This article describes the profoundly hearing impaired as Limited English Proficient (LEP) students and discusses the interrelationship of the theoretical backgrounds of Cummins' (1984) Language Proficiency Model, The Process Writing Approach, and Chamot and O'Malley's (1987) Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA). It shows how the components of Process Writing can be used as a vehicle for the implementation of CALLA. This is followed by an integrated lesson plan model designed for secondary LEP students.

Integrating Theory and Practice: A Process Writing Approach for Secondary Deaf Students

While approaches for teaching the hearing impaired vary greatly, the efficacy of any one method in terms of these students' academic success remains questionable. In concrete ways that such success can be measured, specifically, standardized tests administered in Standard Written English, it is difficult to assess whether low scores result from a poor understanding of the subject matter or of the language itself. Indeed, Oller and Perkins in Cummins (1984) state that:

> A single factor of global language proficiency seems to account for the lion's share of variance in a wide variety of educational tests including nonverbal and verbal IQ measures, achievement batteries and even personality inventories and affective measures...the results to date are...preponderantly in favor of the assumption that language skill pervades every area of the school curriculum even more strongly than was ever thought by curriculum writers or testers (p.132).

Such a statement raises several questions with regard to the hearing impaired. First, does this factor of global language proficiency apply to them as well as hearing Limited English Proficient (LEP) students? Second, what is this underlying factor and finally, how can this factor be acquired?

In an attempt to answer these questions, this article discusses the hearing impaired as LEP students and through three interrelated components -- Cummins'(1984) model of language proficiency, Chamot and

O'Malley's (1987) Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) and the Process Writing Approach -- suggests how secondary hearing impaired students can become more proficient second language users through the facilitation of a joint English/social studies program.

The Hearing Impaired as Limited English Proficient Students

American Sign Language (ASL) is now generally recognized as a language in the full linguistic sense of the word (Wilbur, 1980). The body of research on the phonological, syntactic and semantic acquisition of ASL suggests that deaf children of deaf parents, exposed to ASL as their first language acquire that language at the same rate and follow essentially the same principles as hearing children acquiring a language (Meadow, Greenberg, Erting & Charmichael, 1981).

These deaf children, however, comprise only 5 to 10% of the total deaf population in the United States (Mitchell, 1982). To say that the majority of deaf children, those of hearing parents, do not have ASL as their native language is not to imply, however, that English is their native language (Trybus, 1982). According to Luetke-Stahlman (1982), "Most [of these] hearing-impaired children do not acquire the rudiments of the parents' home language and, instead utilize a set of idiosyncratic gestures and isolated oral words to convey basic needs" (p. 848). These children, whether or not their parents learn some form of manual communication, usually arrive at preschool with very little or no knowledge of any language (Stevens, 1980).

It is during this first formal educational experience that such children come into contact with peers from deaf families whose L1 is ASL. According to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), "to date, evidence

has been presented which demonstrates speaker model preferences of three sorts: peers over teachers, peers over parents and own ethnic group members over non-members" (p. 29). It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that these deaf children of hearing parents will acquire ASL from their peers who, if one considers "ethnic" in this sense to mean cultural, are the preferred speaker models in the three above-mentioned categories. However, the form of ASL which they acquire differs from that of the deaf children of deaf parents in two significant ways.

First, since these deaf children of hearing parents have such initial, limited communication at home, they have no language which can truly be called native. The manner of acquisition coupled with age of acquisition results in what is called, instead, a primary language (Trybus, 1980). Second, for children's language to progress in acquisition, they need to be exposed to language beyond their their own repetoire (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). What these children acquire is a "playground variety" of ASL, so named because no adult language models are present (Erting, 1978).

Delayed language acquisition combined with the acquisition of an immature variety of ASL as a primary language in an English dominant environment qualifies these students, then, as Limited English Proficient and as such they, along with the native users of ASL, face many of the same problems in gaining second language proficiency as their hearing counterparts. The nature of these problems as well as a framework for their solution can be found in Cummins' Language Proficiency Model.

A Language Proficiency Model

Cummins (1984) believes that there is an underlying proficiency common to a learner's first and second language and that this proficiency in the learner's L1 can be used to predict proficiency in his L2. Termed cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP), this proficiency is distinguished from a conversational fluency necessary for daily activities, or basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS). BICS refers to aspects of a language which are more visible and therefore, more easily measured, including surface features, pronunciation and vocabulary while CALP refers to pragmatics and semantics, features more difficult to measure (Cummins, 1984). The important point of this distinction, Cummins (1984) states is that, "some heretofore neglected aspects of language proficiency are considerably more relevant for students' cognitive and academic progress than are the surface manifestations of proficiency frequently focused on by educators..." (p.137-8). When one views the traditonal language teaching focus, such a distinction for L2 instruction becomes more important. The preponderance of material available on the market today emphasizes these visible aspects of language, and the most obvious way to teach these aspects, whether it is in the L1 or L2, is the component approach, that of moving from the parts to the whole.

Yet, according to Graves and Stuart (1985) "A growing body of research shows that children tend to learn language, oral or written, by moving from whole to parts; they focus on meaning before mastering the fine points of form" (p. 11).

An expansion of this BICS/CALP dichotomy shows language proficiency as two intersecting continua (Cummins, 1984). Along one continuum lies the range of cognitive demands in communication. At one extreme are situations in which cognitive involvement is not required because the autonomous stage of language acquisition, where the necessary linguistic rules have been internalized, has been reached (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987). The other extreme requires much cognitive involvement since the governing linguistic rules have not yet been internalized.

The intersecting continuum refers to situational context or the amount of support for meaning. Context-embedded situations, one extreme of the continuum, are everyday communicative happenings in which many clues to meaning are available, and the participants can negotiate for meaning and receive feedback. Context-reduced situations at the other end include those found within the classroom setting where meaning relies largely on knowledge of the language itself (Cummins, 1984).

To function appropriately in school, students need to be able to work in context-reduced, cognitively demanding situations, and the facilitation of this goal is a major educational aim. However, the realization of such a goal must begin with comprehensible input (Cummins, 1984; Burt & Dulay, 1983). The more comprehensible the initial input, the greater the success in developing L2 skills in context-reduced situations (Cummins, 1984).

While many of those educators heavily invested in Process Writing speak of native language rather than second language learners, their approach to cognitive academic proficiency in language reiterates the idea that to achieve CALP abilities there must be comprehensible input.

It is for this reason, therefore, that Process Writing bears discussion as a means of achieving that end.

Process Writing

Process Writing is based on the belief that the act of writing is not a single step but rather a series of steps, interrelated and recursive in nature. It can be conceptualized as focusing on the tools and techniques the writers need, the knowledge they must develop and the choices they must learn to make (Proett and Gill, 1986). The approach divides itself into four principles: (a) the social nature of language, (b) the needs-based approach to learning language, (c) the nature of the acquisition of mechanics and, (d) the enhancement of language through conferencing.

First, the social nature of language is couched in our human drive to interact and communicate with others. According to Rubin and Kantor (1984), even young infants affect and are affected by others and the roots of language acquisition lie in such nonverbal routines as eye gaze between infant and caretaker. As we mature, our abilities to understand the thoughts and feelings of others support our communicative development.

In a Process Writing classroom students learn through active participation in literate situations where language is used in meaningful ways. Holdaway (1979) suggests that exposure to a rich literate environment full of activity which the student feels to be purposeful will provide an effective environment for attaining true literacy.

Second, language learning is based on individual needs through confirmation of what is known and encouragement of further exploration. Language should be facilitated through pragmatics rather than from its components.

Third, the mechanics of language are learned while students are actively engaged in all phases of the language process. Such active participation provides a framework for the acquisition of language skills, taking them out of isolation. Teaching the mechanics within this larger context shows the students how such conventions contribute to the overall organization and meaning of language.

Finally, language is enhanced in small group or individual conferences which provide context-embedded communication through feedback and clarification. The purpose of these conferences is for students to interact, either with the teacher or peers in such a way that they learn how to interact with their own texts (McCormick-Calkins, 1986).

The process itself begins with idea production which results from discussions, questions, reading models, or journal entries. It is in this first stage that students rehearse with the pre-writing conferencer, generally the teacher, who listens, questions, helps to focus the writer and, if necessary suggests through models himself.

Drafting the initial text is a more solitary activity, moving away from the highly context-embedded communication found in pre-writing as the students rough out their pieces. The isolation often felt in writing is minimized through the frequent use of in-progress conferences as the students determine the need which allows for additional feedback.

When the first draft is complete, the students hold conferences in which they receive reactions to the text content. The purpose of such conferencing is to provide students with input on their focus, sense of audience, need for additional detail, exclusion of extraneous information, and acquisition of more precise vocabulary.

The second and third phases provide the most recursive aspect of Process Writing where the students revise and conference until they are satisfied with their projects or abandon them for different ones.

Self-editing and peer-editing preceed editing with the teacher since additional revisions may still be made at this point. It is this last editing conference, however, a joint effort with the teacher, which produces the final draft of the piece, ready for publication.

Concurrent with the project development, the student is asked to keep either a dialogue journal or a Process Writing journal. Dialogue journals, similar to diaries, have daily entries, are open-ended in nature and often provide impetus for later projects. Process Writing journals require the use of both cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies. Here students write about their writing. Entries include organizational planning processes, evaluative processes, monitoring processes, elaboration and transfer.

Through these journal entries, the students move towards increasingly cognitively demanding situations where the written expression of their thoughts is dependent on the ability to manipulate the language successfully in context-reduced situations.

While it is reasonable to assume that such a procedure for facilitating written language proficiency realizes success with native

language learners, the sucess in achieving CALP abilities with LEP students, including the deaf, is limited if the writing process stays within the confines of the English classroom where topic choice is controlled by the student and, therefore, the cognitive demands as well.

Cummins (1984) states that cognitive/academic proficiency of LEP students may lag as much as five to seven years behind their basic interpersonal communicative skills. This fact takes on added importance when one considers that in the upper grades students now need to be able to use language in cognitively demanding, context-reduced situations. One approach to achieving this goal is the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA).

The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach

CALLA can be defined as a language learning approach which draws on information and concepts from the content areas as the framework for helping students learn the structures and features of English while providing them with the additional support through learning strategies they will need for academic success. This approach is based on both declarative knowledge, or the facts and concepts one has about a subject, and procedural knowledge, or what one knows how to do (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987). The following discussion provides a brief overview of the three components of CALLA and suggests Process Writing, by overlaying it onto this approach, as a means for practical implementation.

Content/curriculum, the first component of CALLA, has its foundations in declarative knowledge. Using information taken from the content area subjects, the purpose of this aspect of CALLA is to build

on prior knowledge within a given area and to develop new concepts (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987).

While this first component focuses on content areas, it embodies a principle of the Process Writing Approach, namely that language learning is needs-based and should be facilitated through confirming what is known and using that knowledge as a basis for further exploration.

Language development, the second component of CALLA has its foundation in procedural knowledge. Here, rather than working with facts and concept students learn how to do something. They gain sufficient knowledge about language so as to be able to manipulate it for academic purposes. Through this component, production moves from the rule based cognitive stage of language acquisition to the autonomous stage where production is no longer actively controlled by rules. (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987). A major goal of this component of CALLA is to enable students to replace context-embedded, cognitively undemanding activities with context-reduced, cognitively demanding ones (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987).

Through Process Writing, English becomes a tool for expression rather than rules to be learned. English language functions are explained through mini-lessons as the need arises within a piece of student writing. The results of such lessons are twofold: (a) the student sees the language as a means of expressing real and relevant concepts and, (b) the functions taught are more readily retained because of student ownership in the written piece.

The third component, learning strategies instruction, helps students learn skills which are specific to interacting with information

through comprehension, internalization and retrieval. Currently, Chamot and O'Malley (1987) divide these strategies into three major groups: (a) social-affective, (b) cognitive and, (c) metacognitive.

Although, as O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo and Kupper (1985) suggest training students in these learning strategies may enhance learning, these strategies may also, and perhaps more effectively, be facilitated through the use of Process Writing where strategies become internalized through manipulation.

Social-affective strategies are based primarily on human interaction and include cooperative learning, questioning and the use of affective controls (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987). Among the purposes for such interaction are requesting additional information, clarifying, checking comprehension, group problem solving, and receiving feedback.

Conferencing, an integral part of Process Writing, employs many of the purposes found in this first group of learning strategies. It is through conferencing that students learn which parts of their writing need clarification, which parts need expansion and which parts have been received as intended.

Cognitive strategies allow the student to interact with the information. This is achieved through organizing, summarizing, notetaking and elaborating on information, to name a few. In Process Writing these strategies are practiced most specifically during pre-writing and drafting. Through rehearsal and preplanning, the students learn organizational techniques while, as they work through the various drafts, they hone skills such as recombination, elaboration and transfer. Self-editing, depending on the extent to which the students

are able to perform the task, may be categorized either with cognitive or metacognitive strategies.

Metacognitive strategies are highly introspective and include self-monitoring/correcting, self-evaluation, and consciously planning for learning. These strategies, specifically such executive processes as self-monitoring and self-evaluation, are dealt with in Process Writing primarily through journal entries. It is here that the students discuss their own writing, areas of concern, knowledge they have gained through writing a specific piece, and what they hope to gain from conferencing.

Thus, Process Writing can be viewed as a viable vehicle for the implementation of the components of CALLA. The following integrated lesson plan model demonstrates the interaction of a content-area subject with writing in the English classroom.

An Integrated Lesson Plan Model

The Integrated Lesson Plan Model is designed for secondary students who need to be able to use English as a medium for thought and who are not in a self-contained classroom. There are four major goals of this model: (a) to facilitate the students' understanding of content-based information which at the secondary level becomes increasingly complex; (b) to enable students to move from context-embedded, cognitively undemanding situations to context-reduced, cognitively demanding ones; (c) to improve students' ability to use learning strategies successfully and; (d) to improve students'written English skills.

The success of this model is dependent on a number of management techniques. First, the activity must be meaningful; students need to

know the importance of what they are doing as it relates directly to their lives. Second, the activity must be initially grounded in context-embedded, cognitively undemanding situations. An effective means of achieving this end is through active student participation. Third, the English classroom should serve as a place for expansion of ideas and development of written portions of the unit through the Process Writing Approach. Last, grades should be determined by a collaboration of the teachers involved so that the students become responsible not only for the content of their work but its written representation in English.

The specific model used for demonstration purposes is a unit in economics designed for hearing impaired high school seniors, the goal of which is to help students understand how businesses operate. The introduction to the unit is made in the social studies class where the formation of businesses, the purposes of stocks and loans, and the success or failure of businesses are all discussed. Relevant vocabulary is introduced during the presentation but is not specifically taught.

In order to ground such a unit in context-embedded, cognitiviely undemanding situations, the students are given a hands-on assignment; each one plans a business and sets it up through applying for bank loans and/or selling stock. The students offer for sale with bogus money stocks and, later, services/products to people with whom they come in daily contact. After a specified amount of time, the students determine the success or failure of their businesses based on their financial status.

The newly introduced vocabulary quickly becomes internalized since it now is part of the daily conversation as the students plan their

businesses. In order to facilitate sales, students must design and produce advertisements, brochures, flyers and business cards. These activities are carried out in the English classroom following the Process Writing Approach where students read models, rehearse, draft, conference and rewrite until they are satisfied with their work. Publishing is managed through the distribution of flyers, brochures and business cards and the posting of advertisements for the fledgling businesses. Thus, writing is used in meaningful ways as an integral part of the unit rather than as an isolated activity.

Throughout the unit, the students keep daily journals. Entries include information on planning, monitoring the progress, and, finally evaluating success or failure of their businesses.

The aforementioned goals of this model unit are met in the following ways: (a) active student participation in learning rather than instructive-only methods; (b) student interaction at an academic rather than communicative level with peers and adults through promotion of their businesses; (c) writing for a purpose where clarity of thought and precision of implementation become important; (d) journal entries where students manipulate learning strategies instead of being trained in them.

Conclusions

The purpose of this article was to show how and why hearing impaired students can be termed Limited English Proficient, with the resultant current research in the area of L2 learners therefore applicable to their special set of learning constraints, to show the interrelationship of Cummins'Model of Language Proficiency and Chamot

and O'Malley's Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach, and the Process Writing Approach, and finally to show how Process Writing can be used to implement such a language learning approach through a joint English/social studies program.

The evaluation of the success of the plan lies in the assessment of the students' improved ability to use language as a medium for thought as well as their increased knowledge about specific subject matter. In this integrated lesson plan model, the assessment takes the form of a final written evaluation in which the students are asked to determine the degree of success of their businesses and offer reasons supporting their determination.

The Integrated Lesson Plan Model employs the components of CALLA through a Process Writing Approach, demonstrating control of new concepts, control of English as a means for learning and application of learning strategies. While additional practical applications are needed for further substantiation, such a combined approach provides hope for enabling secondary deaf students to achieve greater academic success.

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